

2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



OCEAN COUNT PROJECT RECEIVED NATIONAL AWARD

The Sanctuary Ocean Count project was named Take Pride in America® Outstanding Volunteer Program for 2012. This nationwide partnership program was authorized by Congress to promote appreciation and stewardship of public lands. The project has grown from 150 volunteers in 1996 to over 2,300 volunteers in 2012. Volunteers count whales and record their behavior from over 60 locations across the islands of O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Hawai'i. Over the past 17 years, more than 20,000 volunteers have contributed 100,000 hours of time. This is the project's first national level award.



NEW MANAGEMENT APPROACH

In order to understand the relationship between traditional knowledge and contemporary science, a workshop was held to describe ecosystem-based management with a strong basis in customary practices. Participants reflected on implementing aloha 'āina (deep love for the land and sea), and provided guidance related to management strategies, community knowledge integration, values to incorporate into management plans and evaluation tools for prioritizing uses of natural resources. The Aloha 'Āina Guidance Document provides a new approach to ecosystem-based management, accounting for cultural perspectives and place-based knowledge alongside the best scientific information available.



MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The Sanctuary Advisory Council made over 150 recommendations that are being considered for inclusion in an updated draft management plan. Recommendations included shifting the focus of sanctuary management from a single species to an ecosystem-based approach. Related reports addressed humpback whales, climate change, law enforcement, maritime heritage, Native Hawaiian culture, ocean literacy, offshore development and water quality. The yearlong process included cultural advisors, ocean users, scientists, technical experts and state and federal agency partners.

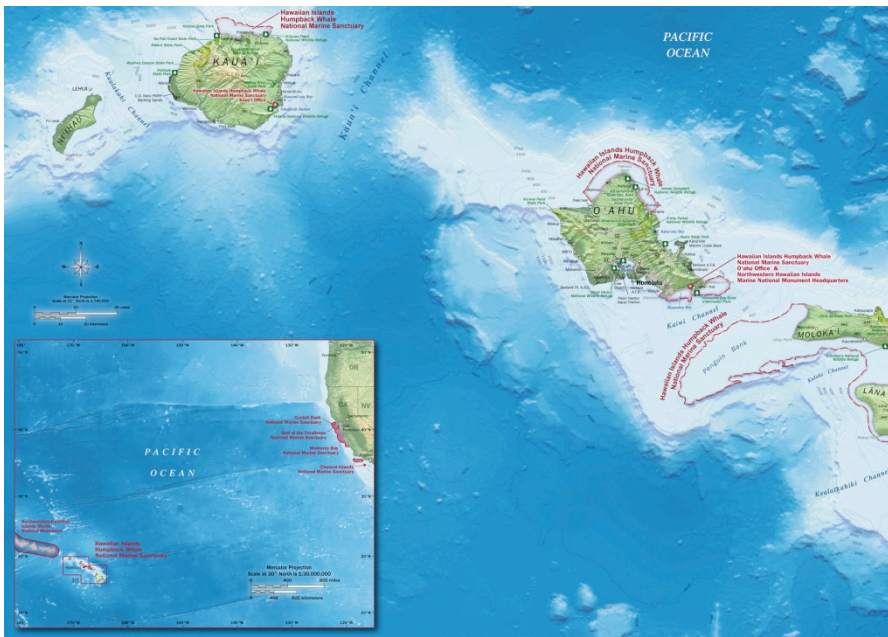


NEW VISITOR CENTER AND VESSEL DEDICATED

This year the sanctuary celebrated the dedication of a new visitor center and a research and response vessel on Maui. The renovated, historic building in Kīhei will provide educational opportunities for local, national and international visitors. New exhibits are being developed to interpret marine and cultural resources, including the 500 year old Native Hawaiian fishpond located at the sanctuary's Kīhei property. The new research vessel, *Koholā*, will be utilized by the sanctuary and its partners for marine mammal research and response to entangled humpback whales or other marine wildlife in distress.

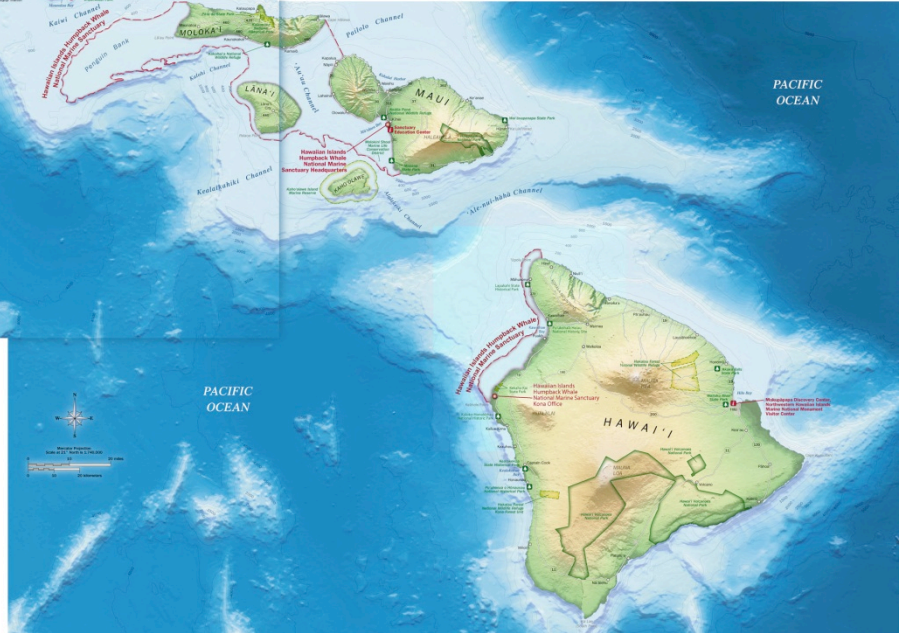
LOOKING AHEAD

- Expanding partnerships with local communities and businesses is a priority of the sanctuary. Collaborations are underway at Whalers Village Shopping Center (Maui) and Turtle Bay Resort (O'ahu) to increase outreach programs and provide educational opportunities for students, residents and visitors.
- The sanctuary is undergoing a management plan review and is developing a draft management plan. Comments received during public scoping periods and recommendations developed by the Sanctuary Advisory Council are being considered in the new plan which is expected to be released in fall 2013.



- The sanctuary office on O'ahu will relocate to the recently built NOAA Inouye Regional Center on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. This state-of-the-art facility will be home to all NOAA offices on O'ahu and will enhance intra-agency coordination.

Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary lies within the shallow, warm waters surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands and is one of the most important humpback whale habitats in the world. Scientists estimate that two-thirds of the entire North Pacific humpback whale population migrates to Hawaiian waters each winter to breed, calve and nurse their young. The continued protection of humpback whales and their habitat is crucial to the long-term recovery of this endangered species. Established November 4, 1992.



NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY SYSTEM

Olympic Coast
Cordell Bank
Gulf of the Farallones
Papahānaumokuākea
Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale
Monterey Bay
Channel Islands
American Samoa (U.S.)



Thunder Bay
Stellwagen Bank
Monitor
Gray's Reef
Florida Keys
Flower Garden Banks

○ National Marine Sanctuary
△ Marine National Monument
Scale varies in this perspective. Adapted from National Geographic Maps.

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for a system of 14 marine protected areas encompassing more than 150,000 square miles of marine and Great Lakes waters from Washington state to the Florida Keys, and from Lake Huron to American Samoa. The system includes 13 national marine sanctuaries and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. For more information on the National Marine Sanctuary System, visit: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is committed to supporting lives and livelihoods across the nation and in sanctuary communities through socioeconomic research and monitoring to understand the economic and social drivers of sanctuary resources and improve management practices.